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## Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace any/all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application, wherein additions are shown in underlined text and deletions are shown in strike-out text or between brackets ([]):

- 1. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer having a front surface, a back surface, a central axis, a circumferential edge portion and a region between the front and back surfaces, the silicon wafer comprising:
- a first denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the front surface;
- a second denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the back surface; and
  - a bulk region being formed between the first and second denuded zones,
- wherein a <u>first</u> concentration profile of defects in the bulk region has a distribution which is maintained substantially constant in a direction from the front surface to the back surface:

wherein a second concentration distribution of defects in the bulk region is maintained substantially constant in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion; and,

said defects being bulk micro-defects (BMD) including oxygen precipitates and bulk stacking faults.

## 2. (Canceled)

- 3. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer according to claim [2]  $\underline{1}$ , wherein the concentration of the defects in the region between the first and the second denuded zones has a distribution which is maintained constant in a range from about  $3.0 \times 10^8$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup> to about  $1.0 \times 10^{10}$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup>.
- 4. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer having a front surface, a back surface, a central axis, a circumferential edge portion and a region between the front and back surfaces, the silicon wafer comprising:
- a first denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the front surface:

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a second denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the back surface; and,

a bulk region being formed between the first and second denuded zones,

wherein a <u>first</u> concentration profile of defects in the bulk region has a distribution which is maintained substantially constant in a direction from the front surface to the back surface:

wherein a second concentration distribution of defects in the bulk region is maintained substantially constant in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion; and

wherein the defects are bulk stacking faults.

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- 5. (Original) A silicon wafer according to claim 4; wherein the concentration of the defects in the region between the first and the second denuded zones has a distribution which is maintained constant in a range from about  $1.0 \times 10^8$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup> to about  $3.0 \times 10^9$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup>.
- 6. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer according to claim 1, wherein the distances of the first and the second denuded zones from the front and back surfaces respectively are in a range from about 5 µm to about 40 µm and are substantially constant in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion.
- 7. (Original) A silicon wafer according to claim 1, wherein the first and the second denuded zones are substantially defectless regions in which oxygen precipitates and bulk stacking faults are substantially removed.
- 8. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer having a front surface, a back surface, a central axis, a circumferential edge portion and a region between the front and back surfaces, wherein the region between the front and back surfaces comprises:
- a first denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the front surface;
- a second denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the back surface; and
  - a bulk region being formed between the first and second denuded zones,

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wherein a <u>first</u> concentration profile of defects between the front and back surfaces of the wafer has a stepwise shape having an axial symmetry at the center between the front and back surfaces of the wafer,

wherein the bulk region has vertically-rising <u>first</u> concentration gradients at boundaries of the first and second denuded zones and a horizontal <u>first</u> concentration gradient over the bulk region, and

wherein [a] the first concentration profile of defects in the bulk region has a planar shape within a range of variation of about 10% or less,

wherein a second concentration distribution of defects in the bulk region has a range of variation of about 10% or less in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion; and,

said defects being bulk micro-defects (BMD) including oxygen precipitates and bulk stacking faults.

## 9. (Canceled)

- 10. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer according to claim [9] 8, wherein the concentration of the defects in the region between the first and the second denuded zones has a distribution which is maintained constant in a range from about 3.0×10<sup>8</sup> ea/cm<sup>3</sup> to about 1.0×10<sup>10</sup> ea/cm<sup>3</sup>.
- 11. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer having a front surface, a back surface, a central axis, a circumferential edge portion and a region between the front and back surfaces, wherein the region between the front and back surfaces comprises:

a first denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the front surface:

a second denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the back surface; and

a bulk region being formed between the first and second denuded zones.

wherein a <u>first</u> concentration profile of defects between the front and back surfaces of the wafer has a stepwise shape having an axial symmetry at the center between the front and back surfaces of the wafer.

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wherein the bulk region has vertically-rising <u>first</u> concentration gradients at boundaries of the first and second denuded zones and a horizontal <u>first</u> concentration gradient over the bulk region,

wherein [a] the first concentration profile of defects in the bulk region has a planar shape within a range of variation of about 10% or less,

wherein a second concentration distribution of defects in the bulk region has a range of variation of about 10% or less in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion; and

wherein the defects are bulk stacking faults.

- 12. (Original) A silicon wafer according to claim 11, wherein the concentration of the defects in the region between the first and the second denuded zones has a distribution which is maintained constant in a range from about  $1.0 \times 10^8$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup> to  $3.0 \times 10^9$  ea/cm<sup>3</sup>.
- 13. (Currently Amended) A silicon wafer according to claim 8, wherein the distances of the first and the second denuded zones from the front and back edges respectively are in a range from about 5 µm to about 40 µm and have a range of variation of about 10% in a direction from the central axis to the circumferential edge portion.

14. - 46. (Canceled)

47. (New) A silicon wafer having a front surface, a back surface, a circumferential edge portion and a region between the front and back surfaces, wherein the region between the front and back surfaces comprises:

a first denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the front surface;

a second denuded zone being formed up to a predetermined distance from the back surface; and

a bulk region being formed between the first and second denuded zones,

wherein a concentration profile of defects between the front and back surfaces of the wafer has a stepwise shape having an axial symmetry at the center between the front and back surfaces of the wafer,

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wherein the bulk region has vertically-rising concentration gradients at boundaries of the first and second denuded zones and a horizontal concentration gradient over the bulk region,

wherein a concentration profile of defects in the bulk region has a planar shape within a range of variation of about 10% or less, and

wherein the concentration of the defects in the region between the first and the second denuded zones has a distribution which is maintained constant in a range from about 3.0×10<sup>8</sup> ea/cm<sup>3</sup> to about 1.0×10<sup>10</sup> ea/cm<sup>3</sup>,

said defects being bulk micro-defects (BMD) including oxygen precipitates and bulk stacking faults.

48. (New) A silicon wafer according to claim 47, wherein the distances of the first and the second denuded zones from the front and back edges respectively are in a range from about 5  $\mu$ m to about 40  $\mu$ m.